

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 241237Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5694

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1187

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO, IS

SUBJECT: HYDROLOGICAL INFORMATION ON WADI ARABA

REF: STATE 35874

1. ISRAELIS HAVE PUBLISHED VERY LITTLE HYDROLOGICAL DATA ABOUT WADI ARABA AREA. ONLY INFORMATION WE HAVE FOUND SO FAR ON SUBJECT IS CONTAINED IN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WATER COMMISSION'S 1973 PUBLICATION ENTITLED " WATER IN ISRAEL" WHICH PROVIDES DATA FOR YEAR 1971. EXCERPTS FROM THIS PUBLICATION WILL BE HAND CARRIED TO AMMAN ON COURIER RUN FEB 25.

2. WE HAVE OFFICIAL FIGURE FOR TOTAL WATER USE IN WADI ARABA AREA FOR 1974. FIGURE SUGGESTS THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO INCREASE IN WATER PRODUCTION IN WADI ARABA SINCE 1971, I.E., ONLY SOME 14 TO 20 MCM OF WATER, MAINLY BRACKISH, PRODUCED FROM BORINGS AND SPRINGS IN ENTIRE WADI ARABA AREA. WE THUS CONCLUDE THAT, WHILE HYDROLOGICAL WORK IS PRESUMABLY CONTINUING IN AREA, THERE APPARENTLY HAS BEEN NO MAJOR ADVANCE IN DEVELOPING LOCAL WATER SUPPLY IN RECENT YEARS.

3. COMMENT: TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENT WORK WE WOULD HAVE TO GO DIRECTLY TO GOI AND EXPLAIN WHY WE WANTED DATA. WE BELIEVE THAT ON BALANCE, GIVEN LIMITED RESULTS
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OF ISRAELI WATER EXPLORATIONS SO FAR AND RISK OF LEAK TO

ISRAELI PRESS, IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO DEFER A USG REQUEST
FOR CURRENT DATA UNTIL SUCH TIME AS IT MIGHT BE MADE
WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF ISRAEL-JORDAN NEGOTIATIONS. IN THAT
EVENT, EXCHANGE OF WATER DATA WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE SEEN BY
ISRAELIS AS DESIRABLE STEP TOWARD ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN
TOW COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, IF DEPARTMENT WISHES TO PROCEED
BEFORE ISRAEL-JORDAN NEGOTIATIONS, I BELIEVE PRESS LEAKS
COULD BE AVOIDED BY DIRECT CONTACT BY ME WITH ALLON WITH
REQUEST THAT MATTER BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY. HE MIGHT
SEE VIRTUE IN THIS U.S. GESTURE TOWARD JORDAN.
KEATING

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